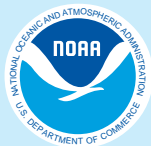




# **THE STATE OF CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS OF THE UNITED STATES AND PACIFIC FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES: 2002**



**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
In Cooperation with Partners from Federal,  
State, Territorial, and Commonwealth Agencies,  
and the Pacific Freely Associated States**



## About This Document

Called for by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force's (USCRTF) *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs*, this is the first biennial report on the condition of coral reefs. It is the scientific baseline for subsequent reports on the health of U.S. coral reef ecosystems that are to be used by NOAA and others to evaluate the efficacy of coral reef conservation and management practices.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Ocean Service led the development of this report. It was authored by 38 experts and supported by 79 contributors from government agencies and non-governmental organizations across the nation and internationally. Over 100 Task Force members and other notable scientists have reviewed this document.

**Acknowledgments** – This document was prepared and printed under the auspices of NOAA's National Ocean Service in cooperation with federal and non-federal (State, Territory, and Commonwealth) members and staff of the USCRTF, and other eminent coral reef scientists and managers. The authors thank the many individuals that helped make this document what it is. We are especially grateful to Ruth Rowe for all her assistance in editing and formatting this report. Kevin McMahon assembled the sizable bibliography. Special thanks are due all the photographers who contributed their high quality art to this report. They made the story come alive.

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# THE STATE OF CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS OF THE UNITED STATES AND PACIFIC FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES: 2002



**Executive Summary and National Summary** by Donna D. Turgeon and Rebecca G. Asch

**Status Reports by Jurisdiction:**

**Florida** by Billy D. Causey, Richard E. Dodge, Walter Jaap, Ken Banks, Joanne Delaney, Brian D. Keller, and Richard Spieler

**Puerto Rico** by Cruz A. Matos, Jorge R. Garcia, and Ernesto Diaz

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**Navassa Island** by Margaret W. Miller

**Hawai'i** by David A. Gulko, James E. Maragos, Alan M. Friedlander, Cynthia L. Hunter, and Russell E. Brainard

**American Samoa** by Peter Craig

**Guam** by Robert H. Richmond and Gerry W. Davis

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands** by John Starmer, Michael Trianni, and Peter Houk

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## Authorizations, Appropriations, Agency Actions

**Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000** – The Coral Reef Conservation Act ( Public Law 106-562, U.S.C. 6401 *et seq.*, December 2000) authorizes \$16 million annually from 2000-2004 to the Secretary of Commerce to help preserve, sustain, and restore the condition of coral reef ecosystems. The Act authorizes 1) the establishment a new Coral Reef Conservation Program to providing matching grants for projects that conserve coral reefs, and 2) funding for a National Program to conduct a variety of coral reef activities such as mapping, assessment, monitoring, research, restoration, public outreach, and removing abandoned fishing gear, marine debris, and grounded vessels. The Act also requires the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to develop a National Coral Reef Action Strategy, and authorizes establishing a Coral Reef Conservation Fund to build public-private partnerships for coral reef conservation. See <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/> for more information.

**2000-02 Agency Activities** – A variety of government (Federal, State, Territory, Commonwealth) and non-governmental partners are engaged in activities that help conserve, protect, and manage coral reef ecosystems. Some activities have increased since 2000. For example, beginning in 2000 the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior received new funding specifically related to coral reef conservation. Other entities have continued or shifted resources to begin addressing coral reef related issues on land and at sea. For more information please contact the United States Coral Reef Task Force <http://coralreef.gov/>.

**Coral Reef Presidential Order** – As part of the National Ocean Conference in June 1998, President Clinton signed the Coral Reef Protection Executive Order (13089) to conserve and protect the health, biodiversity, heritage, and ecological, social, and economic values of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. The Executive Order tasks Federal agencies with a number of actions including reviewing and increasing efforts to protect coral reef ecosystems, working with State and Territorial resource trustees and other partners. The Order created an interagency U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) to oversee implementation of the Order. For more information see <http://coralreef.gov/>.

**United States Coral Reef Task Force** – Established by Executive Order 13089 in 1998, the USCRTF is co-chaired by the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Commerce. It is composed of the heads of 11 Federal agencies, the Governors of 7 states and territories, and the Presidents of the Freely Associated States (Palau, Marshal Islands, and Micronesia). Working with many government and non-government partners, the USCRTF adopted the *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs* (National Action Plan) in March 2000, the first national blueprint for U.S. action to address the loss and degradation of coral reefs. The National Action Plan outlines thirteen major goals to address key threats to reefs. For more information on the Task Force please see <http://coralreef.gov/>.



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